

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Amesbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

School Lane

Amesbury

Salisbury

Wiltshire

SP4 7DT

**Diocese: Salisbury**

LA: Wiltshire

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> March 2006

Date of last inspection: December 1999

School's Unique reference number: 126393

Headteacher: Mr K. Brown

Inspector's name and number: Mrs P. Day

#### School context

As a Church of England school, Amesbury Church of England Aided Junior school is ineffective in promoting sufficiently, the distinctive character of its Christian foundation.

#### Summary Judgement

Amesbury Church of England Aided Junior school has been, and continues to be, in a difficult situation. There has been above average staff turn over. The previous headteacher has been absent due to ill-health and the present headteacher was appointed in September 2005. Along side very challenging circumstances the school has a falling role and is due to close as an aided junior school in July 2006. It will amalgamate with the infant school and re-open, on the same site, in September 2006 as a Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School.

The current headteacher, staff and governors are to be commended on working together as an effective team, bringing stability to the school as it prepares for the next stage of its development.

#### Established strengths

- improvement in work ethic, self-esteem and attitudes throughout the school
- good relationships established within the school
- developing Church links and extensive support from the Diocesan Board of Education

#### Focus for development

- to build a Christian ethos and fully promote the distinctive Christian foundation in relation to a revised Mission Statement agreed by staff, governors, parents and learners
- develop a whole-school system for planning and recording collective worship to support monitoring and evaluating the provision made, in accordance with worship in a Church of England school
- raise standards in Religious Education by fully implementing assessment, monitoring and evaluation in order to meet the needs of all learners.

#### How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

The distinctive Christian character of the school is not sufficiently evident and is inadequate to meet the needs of all learners.

The school is a caring school and, as stated in its prospectus, recognises the importance of valuing the whole-child. However, there is little evidence to suggest that the school's distinctively Christian values impact on the every day life of the school, to support all groups of learners. This is borne out by the school's Self Evaluation Form. No church school self evaluation is available.

Discussion with some parents and learners shows that there is little awareness or recognition of the school's distinctive foundation.

Overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. As a result of the consistent good use of staff management strategies, behaviour has improved but remains an issue. An effective, inclusive system offers rewards and incentives for all learners. Some learners have a positive input when sharing their views through the school council or by taking responsibility as a 'buddy' or prefect. As a result there has been an improvement in learners' self-esteem and attitudes through out the school and good relationships have been established. One year 6 member

commented, "I am proud of my school now".

Reflective areas have been established in all classrooms and are well used, providing good opportunities for further development of spiritual awareness. Prayer boxes in classrooms offer valuable opportunities for learners' individual thoughts and feelings to be expressed.

#### **What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?**

Overall provision is satisfactory and has a positive impact on the school community. Work and achievements are celebrated during collective worship. Collective worship is known as 'assembly' in school, which does not convey the nature of Christian worship.

The quality of worship observed is good. Learners are engaged and attentive and as a result respond well to the opportunity for quiet reflection.

The current system for planning and recording worship is inadequate and does not reflect the use of distinctively Christian elements, in order to develop an effective understanding of Anglican tradition. It does not support the monitoring and evaluation of the provision made for worship in a Church of England school.

Whole-school collective worship takes place on three days with classroom worship twice weekly. All teachers lead worship regularly. The school plans to enhance further the provision of training and resources in the summer term.

Although there has been little involvement with the local church in the past, the vicar and curates now lead worship regularly which is beginning to underpin the developing Christian ethos.

Other visitors to the school, such as the regular and valued contribution by the Bridge Project, furthers impacts on the spiritual growth of all learners.

#### **How effective is the religious education?**

Provision for Religious Education is ineffective overall. Standards in R.E. are currently below national expectations. The scheme of work, linked to the Locally Agreed Syllabus is not yet supported by an established system for assessment. This impacts on the development of learners' knowledge and understanding, effective future planning and appropriate challenge for higher achievers.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and, due to a consistent approach, progress in the lessons observed is satisfactory. Attention to pace and rigor in planning would allow more time for meaningful discussion at the end of lessons.

A variety of approaches are used such as drama, video presentations and class or group discussion. Consequently all learners have appropriate opportunities to be effectively involved. Drama effectively impacts on consolidating knowledge and understanding. There is limited evidence of written work in books. Marking does not always show learners how to improve their work. The Bridge Project, currently working with year five, adds a supportive dimension for teaching and learning through the use of cameras, filming and I.C.T.

Christianity is appropriately the main focus of study which supports the distinctive character of the school.

During the summer term R.E. is a focus for development, fully supported by the Diocese. Staff are keen to take responsibility and to work together with the infant school for training to establish a future whole-school approach.

#### **How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?**

The leadership and management of the school as a church school are inadequate. There is little evidence to show that an effective, distinctive Christian vision is being promoted.

The headteacher has leadership qualities which have a strong impact on the overall management of the school. As a result there has been significant improvement since last September. However, although the school has moved forward in many aspects its profile as a church school remains implicit.

The development of Christian values are identified in the aims of the school as being 'broadly' rather than 'distinctively' Christian. Staff, parents and learners have insufficient involvement in promoting and evaluating an agreed, shared vision.

The governors provide tangible support in the management of the school and are working in preparation towards the coming amalgamation. A designated governor is responsible for overseeing religious education.

Church involvement, until recently, has been limited. Satisfactory links have been

established which effectively provide good opportunities for further development. Parents and members of the wider community regularly attend school services in the church.

The significant, general improvement in the school during the past year results from the headteacher, governors and staff working together effectively as a team. They have been well supported by the diocese and the local church.

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